

## From the Editor

On a recent Saturday morning I read a story in the metro section of *The Buffalo News*, headlined “Mayor offers advice on cigarette taxes.” Apparently without irony, the *News*’ headline writer was referring to this remark, made by New York City’s mayor, Michael Bloomberg, on an Aug. 13 radio show:

“Now, why every governor, and I’ve said this to David Paterson, I said, you know, get yourself a cowboy hat and a shotgun. If there’s ever a great video it’s you standing in the middle of the New York State Thruway saying, you know, ‘Read my lips: The law of the land is this and we’re going to enforce the law.’”

The *News* is no great fan of the Seneca Nation, which runs a number of Indian reservation smoke shops from Western New York’s northern to southern counties. It also has two large casino-hotels (one in Niagara Falls and the other in Salamanca) and another smaller slots-only casino in the City of Buffalo. The *News* is, both on its editorial page and its news pages, firmly against an expansion of the casino in Buffalo and even more firmly against the Seneca’s smoke shops, which sell cigarettes and gas (and in some larger stores, items ranging from fine jewelry to sneakers) without state excise and sales taxes. But to characterize Bloomberg’s remarks as “advice” seems a bit much even for that newspaper.

I waited, admittedly, with bated breathe, for the firestorm that would follow the mayor’s comments.

None came, perhaps because Bloomberg is embroiled in a larger controversy regarding remarks he has made concerning the building

of a mosque and Islamic center near Ground Zero in New York City.

The Seneca Nation’s president, Barry Snyder, was later quoted in the *News*: “As an elected leader sworn to uphold all laws of the land, does he [Bloomberg] feel he has the right to pick and choose which parts of the Constitution he favors because of his clearly biased beliefs?” Snyder added that Bloomberg’s comments were “reckless and insensitive.”

Gunowners have known Bloomberg to be both reckless and insensitive for some time. He is the founder of Mayors Against Illegal Guns (MAIG) and used some of his own considerable wealth (he is listed as the 8th richest man in the US) to pay for straw purchases of guns in Virginia and Georgia to “prove” that illegal guns were making their way to NYC. That he knowingly spent his money for people to illegal purchase guns, even if you accept the “noble” premise that he was proving a point, shows that he has very little regard for the laws the vast majority of Americans follow.

Bloomberg seems tailor made for the role of modern day Napoleon, a man of boundless ambition for his own ideas, backed by his own treasure. (His website—[mikebloomberg.com](http://mikebloomberg.com)—details much of his social and political agenda.)

He successfully fought to have New York City’s term limits rolled back so that he could seek—and win—a third term as mayor. Even Rudy Guiliani, no slouch in the Napoleon department, didn’t try to usurp that law. Bloomberg won his third term, but it was a much tougher—and costlier—race than had been originally thought.

While I found Bloomberg’s re-

marks about the Senecas somewhat absurdly amusing, especially in light of the fact that Gov. Patterson, whom Bloomberg advised to “...get a shotgun,” is legally blind, they also reveal quite a bit about the classic hoplophobe.

The term “hoplophobe” was coined by the late Col. Jeff Cooper to denote someone with an irrational fear of guns.

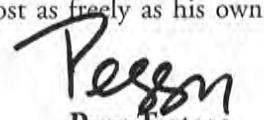
Most hoplophobes, in their fear and ignorance, also imbue guns with some sort of magical powers—powers which would apparently allow a blind man to abrogate treaties by the mere display of this shotgun.

There is also a long, long tradition of anti-gunners who say one thing but do another in their personal lives. The number of anti-gun politicians and celebrities with armed bodyguards, for example, is staggeringly long.

To his credit, Patterson, who is not running for reelection, offered a mild rebuke to Bloomberg, a political ally, through a spokesman; commenting to the *News*, “While we certainly respect Mayor Bloomberg’s opinion, the governor’s approach to these issues will not change. This administration has a policy of litigation, negotiation and enforcement and it has been a successful policy so far.”

Bloomberg, with his “big cowboy hat,” apparently hadn’t thought of “litigation, negotiation and enforcement” as approaches to this, or most other matters.

With opinions on everything from the salt content of his city residents’ diets to Indian treaties, and from guns to global warming, Bloomberg may never have right on his side, but he always has might—political capital which he spends almost as freely as his own money.

  
Pegg Tartaro,  
Executive Editor